

Ja-Hut Vineyards
P. O. Box 547
Clements, California 95227
209-727-5811 * Fax 209-727-5716

RECEIVED
AUG 11 2000
CALFED Bay-Delta Program

August 9, 2000

Mr. Steve Ritchie, Acting Executive Director
Cal-Fed Bay-Delta Program
1416 Ninth St., CA 95814

Re: Final Programmatic EIS/EIR

Dear Mr. Ritchie:

I am concerned about how Cal-Fed programs will affect the environment on farms and ranches. Agriculture is an important part of California's environment. Cal-Fed plans to convert nearly a quarter of a million acres of farmland to habitat and other uses. It should study the environmental impact of that land conversion. Cal-Fed must seek ways to avoid taking farmland out of production.

My land has been farmed since 1876. In my vineyard, I provide nesting boxes for owls. We also have a buffer strip between our vineyard and the creek, to help clean irrigation water that drains into the river.

Cal-Fed should hold public hearings to explain its plans before they become final. Cal-Fed should tell us how its plan has changed and how it will affect people. Cal-Fed should not finalize its plan until citizens have adequate opportunity to review it and comment upon it.

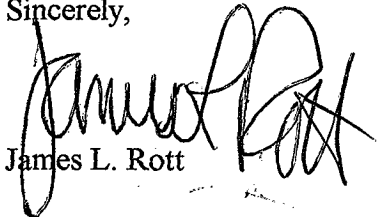
The Cal-Fed plan acknowledges it will have an "irreversible and irretrievable" impact on almost a quarter-of-a-million acres of California farmland. Yet Cal-Fed offers no plan to replace the lost land, simply referring to farmland losses and "unavoidable."

Cal-Fed should conduct its habitat-restoration work on existing government-owned land and reduce its impact on productive farmland. Government already owns half of California's 100 million acres.

In order to meet its environmental goals, Cal-Fed must move aggressively to develop new water storage that provides adequate yield. Farms generally don't need additional new water. But farmers realize the need to make sure there's enough available to meet environmental goals, especially in dry years. The only way to guarantee adequate water especially in aboveground reservoirs. Otherwise, water will be taken away from farms to sustain environmental and urban uses during droughts.

Farmers recognize and support the need to use water more efficiently. In fact, our farms have increased tonnage of agricultural production by two-thirds since 1967, while using less water. But conservation has environmental consequences of its own. Reducing water use can affect ecology of the farm, for example by allowing salts to build up in soil. Agricultural water conservation may also reduce the flow of water into underground aquifers or other water bodies. Cal-Fed should study these impacts before imposing water-efficiency requirements. We have gone to drip irrigation to save on water and energy use.

Sincerely,



James L. Rott

cc: Governor Gray Davis
Senator Dianne Feinstein
Senator Barbara Boxer
San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors